task force representing the unions, fire chiefs, municipal managers, citizens and elected officials recognized that the consolidation would "redistribute resources, eliminate duplication and make structural change both feasible and affordable for each community." After two years of negotiations a formal agreement was signed by five of the communities to coordinate efforts for training, the use of rapid response teams and automatic aid response for high hazard situations. Although a separate, single fire district did not at the time have enough support, the people involved with the project feel that this initial step was critical to building trust among the communities and may eventually lead to a more fully integrated fire district.

SeaSide Fire District, South Shore 1992-1994.

In 1992, the communities of Cohasset, Hingham, Hull, Norwell and Scituate received a $30,000 grant from the Executive Office of Communities & Development (EOCD), to evaluate the benefits of a creating a regional fire district. Although the study concluded that a regional fire district would have represented a cost saving to the communities for training, dispatch and capital expenditures, the Professional Fire Fighter's of Massachusetts (PFFM), a state-wide labor organization, was opposed to the proposal, claiming that the town's had proposed a "shared response" or mutual aid agreement, rather than a regionalized fire service system. The PFFM also challenged the use of the EOCD grant which was intended to study the efficiencies and effectiveness of a consolidated fire service program After two years of discussions and negotiation, the committee dissolved, failing to resolve the issues with the PFFM. According to one town administrator, any attempt to regionalize a fire department must have the cooperation of both the fire chiefs and the PFFM. Regionalization was also difficult to sell politically because of the loss of control over policy decisions and budgets, and for the larger or better funded communities, the perception that they would have been paying the same costs and have fewer fire fighters.

Barnstable County, Massachusetts, 1994-Present

In 1994, the Barnstable County Fire Chief's Association, representing the towns of Brewster, Chatham, Harwich and Orleans, prepared a position statement which supported regionalization as being consistent with the mission of the Association and encouraged regional efforts among the departments to maximize existing and future resources and improve operational efficiency (**Attachment B**).

For the past two years, a regionalism committee of the Association has been discussing the merits of consolidating various fire services for their communities. So far, four of the six communities have agreed to two regionalized services; a Mid-Cape Dive Team and Mid-Cape Technical Rescue Team. The participating communities had been unable to finance individual efforts but were able to support the regional services. The third project under consideration is the purchase and use of an extra ambulance which could be used when a community's vehicle is out-of-service, thereby reducing calls for mutual aid. At this time, it appears that all of the member communities will agree to participate in this project. The next project for the committee's consideration will be communications. According to the Harwich Fire Department, the success of these efforts can be attributed to several factors; agreement from all the chiefs to pursue regional solutions to specific issues, open communications between management and labor, and flexibility from both sides without losing sight of the big picture.

The MetroWest Subregion

Each of the MetroWest towns are individually responsible for the provision of fire services for their residents, and for the protection of life and property through fire prevention, fire suppression and emergency medical and rescue services. Each community is responsible for funding the